

VASIP Steering Committee Meeting Notes March 8, 2007

Attendees: Anne Benner, Mark Blackwell, Janet Davis, Chris Cline, Sterling Deal, Sharon Ekleberry, Will Ferriss, Margaret Anne Lane, Jason Lowe, Janet Lung, Ken Minkoff, Bonnie Neighbour, Joanne O'Connor, Carol Anne Pacer-Ramsey, Mellie Randall, Laurie Rokutani, Caroline Schleifer, Joe Stallings, Will Williams, Arthur Woodruff

Participating by Phone: Ellen Harrison, Marc Goldberg

The meeting was called to order at 10:15 a.m. Sterling Deal updated members on the status of Rhonda Thissen, who is doing well and continues to recover.

Ken Minkoff mentioned a couple key issues for Committee to keep in mind. First, tremendous energy is present for local level system transformation. However, the COSIG grant is in its last fiscal year of full federal funding, so there needs to be some attention paid to sustainability and what role the Steering Committee can play in that. Second, the group should remembering to maintain linkage to the overall statewide transformation initiative.

II. Updates on Recent Activities:

1. Conference Call w/ VACSB Leadership: Ken reviewed the conference calls held with VACSB leadership to attempt to connect them with the VASIP planning to be a part of the statewide transformation initiative. After the first conversation in late December, Ken and Chris incorporated specific elements related to architecture design (and the VACSB's role in that) in their latest report to the Department and state leadership. In the second call, more attention was paid to planning next steps. Subsequently, Chris will be meeting with the VACSB's Leadership Team on March 9 to help build the framework for participation on the part of state leadership in a comprehensive transformation project that includes co-occurring disorders integration.

Ken mentioned that a helpful item going forward that could be considered by the Steering Committee is be a statement from this group that helps to define architecture going forward that the people at these meetings can keep in mind. "Function first" needs to be the mindset here – what is the purpose of shifting the relational model between the VACSB and the state into more of a quality assurance model?

Will Ferriss mentioned the importance of making sure that this group stays involved in the Medicaid conversation about the new funds for substance abuse treatment. Mellie Randall provided an update on the status of the new funds; she stated that DMAS will be preparing emergency procedures, as the services have to be in place by July 1. This fast track means that the regulations will not be subject to the regular process of review. A discussion ensued concerning the regulations, their rollout, and

how to spread the word about this as effectively as possible given that the emergency regulations eventually will be replaced by permanent regulations. Mellie expressed reservations about this implementation strategy, as just publishing the regulations without some thorough consideration may cause problems eventually. The general feeling is that while the money is badly needed, there needs to be care taken in the planning for its expenditure. (The Committee might consider adopting a resolution around this issue to be delivered to the state leadership.)

III. Strategic Planning for Future Committee Activities

Chris Cline created a table to help give some cohesion to this discussion:

Structure	Function
Steering Committee Leadership Academy Grads	Implementation direction and oversight Real, operationalized versions of key terms – everyone means the same thing in conversations Inclusionary strategies Advisory to VACSB/State envisioning collaboration
VACSB/State Visioning Collaboration	Vision/value filter Global Resource Management
Regional Planning Committees CSBs	Regional population management vs. census management (get good at using data and regional partnerships) Systems of Care Development and transformational change Incentive Fund ‘thinking’ Support and develop regional change agent groups
Department Executive Team	Final Policy Authority
Consumer Advocacy Community (VOCAL/SAARA)	Design/implementation/evaluation oversight
COSIG core team ‘Consumer local roots’	Logistical/project management Implementation support
Regional Change Agents	Local transmission of clinical/administrative values improvements

Joanne O’Connor, Sharon Ekleberry, and Anne Benner reiterated the importance of full consumer activity across the spectrum of consumers. More conversation ensued about where to place Medicaid language activity in this chart, but no consensus decision was achieved.

Ken indicated that the VACSB is looking for direction from the State in order that their efforts are in line with the state’s efforts while not being micromanaged. Ken also reviewed the efforts of Region II, indicating how all of the programs throughout the region are involved in creating teams of change agents. The task of these groups is

upheaval of the upper level system management. By empowering them and encouraging them to speaking in a collective voice, these groups are able to gain this kind of currency with upper level management.

Discussion ensued about the marginalization of substance abuse services, and how the focus of the Department is on the facilities, which provide few SA services, so there is a de facto marginalization as well.

Ken crafted some possible recommendations:

1. The Department, in partnership with regional planning partnership entities, the VACSB, state facilities and consumer advocacy groups representing MH, MR and SA, create a **sustainable architecture** for transformation. In this architecture, the current VASIP steering committee can be a starting place, as a representative, boundary spanning entity that can provide consistent vision, and implementation oversight advice, and direction.
2. In this architecture, there are multiple workgroups and activities that must be coherently aligned to effect implementation at the regional and local level.
3. To the state, CSBs, and collaborating partners: In addition, the current VASIP architecture, as described in the State Charter, had engendered widespread transformation energy and implementation activity and can also be used as the basis for the **sustainable architecture** we recommend that includes that state, regions, VACSB, facilities, and consumer advocacy in an organized top down/bottom up process.
4. They recommend that transformation be consistent with current priorities for action, and consistent with the current process and structure as described in the VASIP charter.
5. Recommend that other groups pay attention to what is happening with VASIP and how it is working, as it is a working regional collaborative process with a consistent vision of direction and first steps.

This all feeds into a greater conversation of the role of the Steering Committee into the overall role of the Commonwealth's transformation initiative. Sterling indicated that maybe overall transformation could line itself up with our values, which all seem to be supportive of an overall transformation effort. After some discussion, Ken added this recommendation and modified others.

Carol Ann Pacer-Ramsey added that we need to stop passing the buck, someone has to take the responsibility and embrace this opportunity. Sharon Ekleberry added that she is seriously concerned about the level of authority we might attempt to represent here.

The next meeting of the Committee is scheduled for Tuesday, April 17 at 10 a.m. at the VACSB offices.